



Germany: Facts & Figures January 2010

A monthly overview of current opinion data and statistical information in the Federal Republic of Germany

Politics

According to recent polling, if Bundestag elections would have been held on January 3rd, the CDU/CSU would have received 35% of the vote, followed by the SPD (22%), the Green Party (12%), the FDP (12%), and the Left Party (12%). The remaining parties would have received a combined 7% of the overall vote. (Forsa. 12/28/09)

Sixty-seven percent of those interviewed said they were dissatisfied with the Merkel government, an increase of 7% compared to December figures. Chancellor Merkel lost her title as the "most popular German politician." Only 59% were satisfied with her performance, down from 70% in December. For the first time, the most popular politician is Defense Minister zu Guttenberg, although his support among Germans has also declined, from 69% to 62%. Finance Minister Schäuble ranked third in popularity. The opposition, however, was unable to benefit from this decline in popularity. Opposition leader Frank-Walter Steinmeier received an approval rating of 39%, down from 45%. The poll also revealed that the majority of Germans do not think that the current budget situation would allow for tax cuts. While 38% favored tax cuts, 58% are opposed. (Deutschlandtrend, 01/08/10)

Economy

Unemployment increased in January to 8.6% or 3.617 million people. The unemployment level rose by 342,000 people compared to December, when the jobless rate was 7.8%. (Federal Labor Office, 01/29/10)

Consumer prices rose 0.4% in 2009, the slowest annual inflation rate since unification in 1990. The agency said inflation was slowed by price decreases in mineral oil products and food. (Federal Statistical Office. Major papers, 01/15/10)

The German economy contracted 5% in 2009, by far the worst performance since the end of WWII. Exports were down by 14.7%, while imports were down 8.9%. The worst performance to date was a 0.9% decline in West Germany's GDP in 1975. FT Deutschland reported that 2009 German tax revenues will decrease by 5.9%. (Federal Statistical Office. Major papers, 01/14/10)

Trade with China has resulted in a considerable increase in exports for German companies. In the third quarter of 2009, German companies were able to sell 14.9% more goods to China than in the third quarter of 2008. However, German companies experienced a sharp drop in exports to its five strongest trading partners. Between July and September, German companies sold up to 31% fewer goods to France, the U.S., the Netherlands, the UK, and Italy. The overall export quota dropped 19% in the third quarter to 200.2 billion Euros. (Major papers, 01/05/10)

Society

According to the latest circulation figures, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung* increased its circulation to 351,873 in the fourth quarter of last year, an increase of 3.06%, compared to figures from the same period last year. *Welt am Sonntag* increased its circulation by 0.43 percent to 401,931 copies. The circulation of *Die Zeit* rose by 0.17% to 502,246 copies. *FAZ* dropped slightly by 0.8% to 370,406, while *Sueddeutsche* dropped by 2.24% to 435,433 copies. *Die Welt's* circulation dropped by 3.71% to 260,177 copies. (FAZ. Major papers, 01/15/10)

The number of female soldiers in the Bundeswehr has more than tripled since 2001. More than 17,000 women are serving as temporary, career, volunteer or professional soldiers. The overall percentage of women in the Bundeswehr is 9%. Forty percent of female soldiers work in the Bundeswehr's medical service, while 20% work in the armed forces. (Defense Ministry. *Süddeutsche*, 01/12/10)

Fifty-three percent of immigrants in Germany anticipate a positive future in Germany within the next decade. Among the age group below 25 years, the percentage is even higher, at 70%. Forty-two percent also expect the differences between Germans and immigrants to decrease within the next ten years. The most optimistic are immigrants from the former Soviet Union, while only 45% of Turkish born immigrants were similarly optimistic. With respect to their own degree of integration, 88% of Spanish-born immigrants feel strongly integrated, while only 58% of the Turkish-born and 62% of the Russian-born immigrants are of this opinion. (Bertelsmann Foundation, 01/08/10)

Sixty-three percent of Germans said that they would approve searching all passengers at airports with so-called body scanners. Thirty-one percent rejected the idea. (Forsa. *Stern*, 01/07/10)

ARD-TV's early evening newscast Tagesschau continues to be Germany's most popular newscast with an average of 8.86 million viewers. It is followed by commercial TV station RTL's newscast, RTL Aktuell, with 3.79 million viewers and ZDF-TV's early evening newscast Heute with 3.77 million. (Tagesspiegel. 01/06/10)